

Spring 5-12-2019

Using Multicultural Literature to Enhance the Reading Skills of Youth of Color

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Using Multicultural Literature to Enhance the Reading Skills of Youth of Color

by

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A thesis submitted to the Department of Education of the College at Brockport, State University of New York, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Education

May 11, 2019

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Abstract

21st Century youths live in a diverse world. Students of today, especially youths of color, struggle to connect with what they are learning due to an outdated curriculum that follows literature from the literary canon. The use of multicultural literature needs to be in every classroom for students to understand and appreciate diversity, find self-worth, and truly identify with what they are reading. Implementing multicultural literature into the curriculum will help students be engaged and motivate them to read. It is every educator's duty to ensure students are reaching their fullest potential, that means having a healthy balance of the literary canon and more contemporary multicultural texts. It may be difficult for teachers to change their developed curriculum for a number of reasons but there are a number of resources readily available to help with an adjustment.

Chapter One: Introduction

Problem Statement: Many teachers lack the inclusive instructional skills to teach all 21st Century youth who require a much more diversified curriculum to connect with what they are learning.

America is a melting pot nation where diverse groups from around the world have come together. America once held a majority population of European descent and framed its education system to fit their needs. The largest population of people living in the US during the 20th century was considered to be white. Hobbs and Stoops state that, "Numerically, the White population increased substantially in the 20th century. The White population grew from 66.8

million in 1900, exceeded 100 million by 1930, and passed the 200 million mark by 2000” (Hobbs, Stoops 71). The education system that was set in place worked for the majority group, but that is not the case for the 21st century. The National Center for Education (NCES) stated that in the 21st century, “The number of non-white students is expected to grow even more over the next several years as a result of immigration and birth patterns among Hispanic and Asian populations. By 2023, students of color will represent nearly 55 percent of K-12 students in public schools” (NCES). With the majority of students, no longer being from European descent, the current education programs set in place have become problematic. There needs to be an educational reform that is inclusive to all groups. In particular, it would benefit students if teachers moved toward using a multicultural approach in the classroom.

Most people will at some point work alongside someone who is not from their culture and/or race and many companies are even pushing to maintain a more diverse workforce. Research suggests that diverse groups tend to beat and work better together than groups of similar backgrounds. Zalias states that “It’s not just a feel-good move; it’s good for business. Study after study has shown that diversity leads to more creative teams and increases a company’s bottom line” (Zalias). Secondary education prepares students for the future and that should include educating students about different cultures and getting them to work together. The reason is that working with a diversified group is tough and can be frustrating so students need practice. A study from MIT found:

Diverse teams beat homogenous teams every time in terms of performance ...

homogenous teams felt great during the process and yet they lost, while diverse teams felt miserable during the process until they finished and met their target. No one is telling us

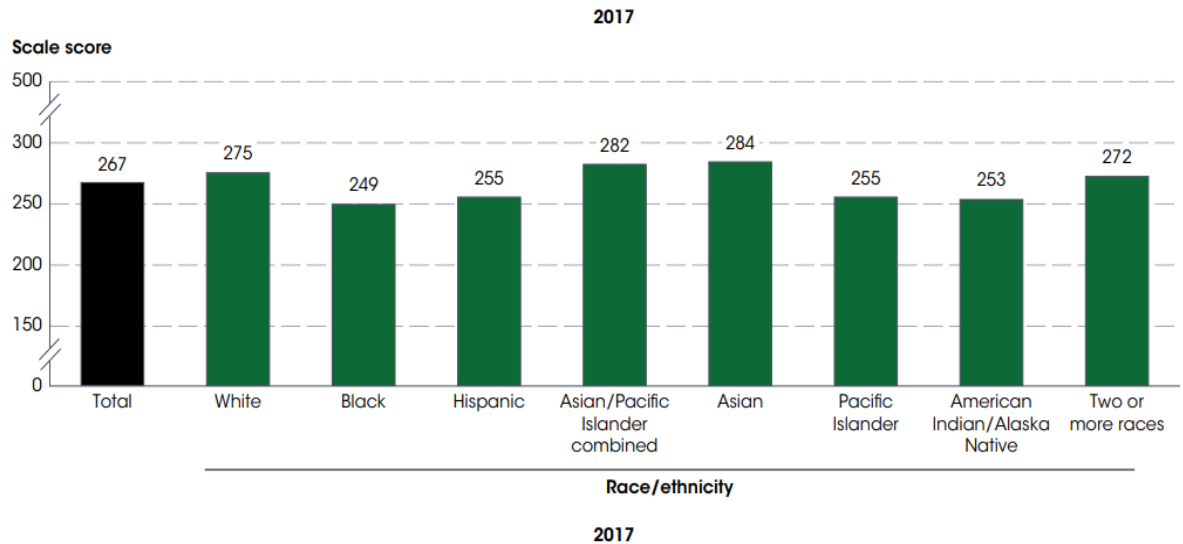
how hard it is...but you have to embrace that because the ultimate outcome will be better.

(Zalias)

Most students learn about others through reading, writing, speaking, and listening, which are all target standards of English Language Arts. Since most of the time in ELA is spent reading, then embracing diversity through literacies is important. Learning to embrace different cultures should be taught in schools, and teachers should focus on implementing diversified curriculum through multicultural literature.

In the literary world today, there is an endless list of multicultural literature at one's fingertips. Teachers no longer need to rely on the canon when deciding what to teach. Since connecting to literature is important for interpretation and analysis, then it can be attributed to one's academic success. In the past, the Eurocentric curriculum lead by canonical literature was set in place but only viewed white people in positions of power and/or the white culture. Many students of color find it difficult to connect to this style of literature. To help students of color connect with literature and to view a purpose within their learning, teachers should focus on a multicultural approach and can do so through using multicultural literature. Teachers must have the knowledge and resources readily available to help all students reach their fullest potential.

21st-century teachers must be aware of the reading gap students of color have compared to their white peers. Research done by the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) shows a consistent gap of reading proficiency for students of color. In 2017, 8th-grade reading proficiency shows that students of color are still measuring considerably lower to others when it comes to reading. The graph below shows that students that are Black, Hispanic/Latino, Pacific Islander, or American Native are as low as 20 points under their White or Asian peers (NAEP).



The 20+ point gap is a serious problem. It is evident that students of color are being left out when a curriculum is dominated by popular literary canon titles.

Research suggests a diversified curriculum is important; lacking literature representing students of color causes a struggle for students to connect to what they are learning. Much of our country's curriculum is European framed, including the literary canon that still holds value in most ELA classrooms. Behmstaff suggests this does not cause a problem for people of European descent as it can help people of the mainstream stay connected with their education, but the problem does arise for students of a minority background (Behmstaff). Caldwell goes so far as to suggest that "Eurocentric education may alienate African-American students" (qtd. in Behmstaff). Feeling alienated or disconnected to reading will result in students being unmotivated to read, creating a negative stigma toward reading in general. Thompson and Shamberger state that "When Black students' cultural backgrounds are integrated into lesson plans and required readings--including relevant and real-life stories to which they can relate--they are more likely to find the curriculum interesting" (4). If students are to become lifelong readers, it is important that they are motivated to read. Motivating students to read can be as

simple as teachers picking literacies that interest them, like pieces that show people that look, sound, and act as they do. This is important for historically disenfranchised students because they typically have lower reading levels. The literary canon has very few multicultural pieces that highlight or are written by people of color. While many outside factors play a role in the reading proficiency gap, it is clear that what we are doing in school is not enough. The reading proficiency gap has been consistently wide from the 1980s through today and will continue to be stagnant if there is not a change in how and what teachers are teaching. The need for a multicultural approach through multicultural literature is clear.

Why is the literary canon no longer good enough for a diverse student body? According to Bidois and colleagues, “Problems can occur when teaching and learning draws mainly from, and therefore implies more value for, one dominant cultural perspective” (9). Teachers do not want to show bias toward one group as this can show students of color that the white culture has more value than their own. Feelings of lost cultural value can decrease a student’s motivation and engagement with reading. Even more so the literary canon focuses on a Eurocentric frame. Minority students should not read only about the same group of people as this can push them to feel one group is out ranking or more important than their own. According to diversity consultant, Wicht, “The literary canon is Eurocentric, male-dominated, and heteronormative, grounded in systems of oppression that have established educational goals and environments with very narrow identity groups in mind” (qtd. in Marshall). To best meet the needs of all students and encourage a positive relationship with reading, the literary canon should no longer be the sole focus of literature selection in the classroom.

The impact a European framed educational system has on students of color is lower graduation rates. Behmstaff suggests that "Because they are taught from a European

perspective, black males have the highest dropout rates, because they don't identify with their education.” The use of a European Framed curriculum can prevent students from leveling up in their reading comprehension thus keeping the reading proficiency gap alive and well. The good news is that there are many works of literature that can be implemented in place of books found in the literary canon.

The choices of modern diverse literature have grown tremendously and are easily accessible, so what is the problem that teachers face? Driven and passionate teachers that want to implement such multicultural approaches face the issue that they themselves have not been exposed enough to such curriculum and do not know how to implement it into their classrooms. Mongillo and Holland state that “...most preservice teachers have little experience in urban schools with diverse student bodies, and noted that White teachers cannot teach courses in multicultural education (‘you can’t teach what you don’t know’) unless they have the “training, experience, and heart to do so” (1). How do teachers learn about and how to implement multicultural educational approaches? Nieto suggests being paired with a veteran teacher that has experience in doing so. “It is critical to place white preservice teachers in urban schools during their field placements and ensure that they are placed with excellent teachers as their mentors in order for them to truly experience diversity and dispel stereotypes” (qtd. in Mongillo and Holland 20). In addition to their personal qualifications, effective teachers share a passion for their students’ diversity, as well as other more personal qualifications, and believe that students have “a right to their identities and their language” (Mongillo and Holland 19). Teachers often acquire the passion to help each of their students reach their highest potential and “research shows the positive effects of using multicultural literature in all classrooms, with all students, and that the choice of authentic multicultural literature has an effect on all students”

(Mongillo and Holland 20). Furthermore, the best piece of advice comes from Bishop that the texts that we read should “... provide windows to view the world, sliding doors to pass through, and mirrors that reflect our lives and experiences” (qtd. in Mongillo and Holland 26). It is important that all students see themselves in the books they read and as Bishop suggests, “...students are exposed to diversity as a regular part of their education and not just ‘hailed out’ for special holidays” (qtd. in Mongillo and Holland 26). Teachers need to make learning about diversity a norm in their classroom.

Significance of the Problem:

If students cannot read at grade level, they are at significant risk of major academic failure. Every two years, The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) assesses student performance in reading in grades 4, 8, and 12 for both public and private schools across the nation. Research proves the notable gap between students of color and white students have remained unchanged from 1980 through 2017. Year after year, the results show that by grade 8 there is still a large gap (in all states across America). While many variables are surrounding these research studies, it is clear that there is a problem of how students of color learn to read. There is even more sense of urgency as the national graduation rate shows the staggering gap between students of color and white students. The 2017 data from the New York State Department of Education (NYSED) shows that 89% of white students graduate, whereas only 69% Black students, 68% Hispanic/Latino students, and only 66% American Indian graduate (NYSED). The 20+ point gap of graduation rates between students of color and white students is alarmingly close to the point gap of reading proficiency. According to Thompson and Shamberger, “The reading score gaps between Black and White students indicate that the U.S. public school system continues to underserve Black students” (4). Since there is a clear problem

and a consistent gap for students of color, there needs to be a change that teachers can control within the classrooms. This change calls for a multicultural approach.

Purpose:

Reading in grades 7-12 is complex and challenging so it is imperative that adolescents learn through authentic motivation and engagement. Reading is a fundamental part of one's success in today's society, and it becomes the teacher's responsibility to guide students to becoming lifelong learners. Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) shows that most educators across the nation are white females and have learned from a European framed curriculum themselves (40). Subsequently, SASS shows that it appears to be difficult for white educators to become more aware and learn about the different multicultural texts available to them (40). The reality is that many schools have fully developed curriculum and teachers may not be able to change much of what they want to implement; however, most school districts do not dictate every single piece of literature a teacher can use in his/her classroom. It is the educator's duty and responsibility to use resources that will help keep students motivated, engaged, and connected to their learning, because reading proficiency drops due to a lack of engagement, motivation, and connection to literature. Students should be exposed to many diverse pieces of literature to help them identify with what they read and establish a global awareness of different cultures.

The literary canon still holds importance for all students whether it is for post-secondary education or the workforce. Leigh believes that the benefits of the literary canon show to help increase vocabulary, improve social skills, teach cultural references, give opportunity to understand history/culture, and stretch the brain. The literary canon can help prepare students to think for themselves. Leigh argues that "By studying the works of the greatest literary minds in

human history, we simultaneously build our knowledge of the world one book at a time and—crucially—*learn to think for ourselves*” (Par. 9). The literary canon provides an opportunity to understand culture through historical periods. Leigh believes that “Great works of literature mark every period of modern history and offer a more personal, accessible perspective on historical events and philosophies than most textbooks” (par. 6). With all the benefits, it is important that teachers still incorporate pieces and selections from the canon; however, to bridge that gap for students of color the solution is to implement a balance of modern multicultural literature into the ELA curriculum. Creating a balance of incorporating the literary canon and modern multicultural literature will allow students to be mindful and prepared for higher level thinking, as well as identify with what they are reading, are motivated to read, engaged in the reading, feel they can better analyze and discuss higher level reading, and be prepared for a Eurocentric framed college and a competitive job market.

Teachers should develop instruction to better serve students of all cultures and heritages. This multicultural approach will help all students, not just students of color, see the similarities and differences in how others view themselves, the world around them, and new ways to problem solve. This can be done several ways in the ELA classroom. Not only do teachers need to be knowledgeable of what they are teaching but how they are teaching it, and teaching with multicultural literature will meet the need to bring culture into the classroom.

Rationale:

The need to get students to read at their grade level is important to their academic success and success as an adult in the future. Teachers should implement multicultural literature and lessons specific to their student population thus helping all students learn their history, culture, and other perspectives. By incorporating multicultural literature into curriculum it will help

students stay motivated and engaged to complete reading tasks. This will ultimately help close the reading achievement gap for students of color.

Definition of Terms:

1. Multicultural Educational approach- Any form of education or teaching that incorporates histories, values, beliefs, fiction/nonfiction, and perspective of people from different cultural, ability, and racial backgrounds.
2. Cultural Diversity- A growth in people of backgrounds, language, race, beliefs other than those of European descent.
3. Diversified literature- Using fictional texts not usually found in the literary canon.
4. Literary Canon-A collection of popular books that have left their mark in history and are widely used in the English Language Arts curriculum. Most books found in the literary canon are written by white people and/or are about white people.
5. Multicultural Literature-Literature about the cultural experiences of underrepresented groups.
6. Reading Proficiency- To read at grade level by demonstrating competency over challenging subject matter. An assessment is done every two years by the National Assessment of Educational Progress.
7. Reading Gap-A disparity in reading proficiency between different groups, in this study the focus is on the difference between white and black students reading achievement.
8. ELA-English Language Arts
9. National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) – the only national assessment in the United States since 1990. Measures student proficiency in reading in grades 4, 8, and 12. Assessment is done every two years.

10. 21st-century teachers- Teachers who are equipped to teach using current technological advances in their classrooms.
11. Reading Gap/Achievement Gap- The percentage and point difference between how many students in a particular race group can read at grade level compared to other race groups that can read at the same grade level.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Reading is a fundamental part of one's success in today's society. Research has shown that there is an achievement gap for students of color success in reading proficiency. According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), in 2015, "only 16 percent of African-American Eighth-graders were proficient in reading." By comparison, the national average of proficient readers in eighth-grade is 34 percent (NAEP). While today's youth seems to be falling short of reading proficiently, research suggests that there is an achievement gap for students of color.

While poverty is the number one leader in the achievement gap, author Tyrone C. Howard recognizes that eliminating poverty is a role that teachers cannot change. Howard suggests focusing on "changeable factors" and that one of these factors is the "recognition of race and culture within schools" (qtd. in Bressler 1). Research by Chappel suggests that "America's diversity remains on the rise, with all racial and ethnic minorities growing faster than white from 2015 to 2016." To be able to truly meet the needs of each student, teachers must recognize the rise in diversity of race and culture within their classroom. There must also be a recognition that despite the rise in such a diverse population, most teachers in the United States are of European descent. The United States Department of Education reported the findings of a

Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), a nationally representative survey of teachers and principals, showed that “... 82 percent of public school teachers identified as white” (1). As student diversity continues to grow, teachers need to become more equipped and be permitted to consider race and culture in their practice. The use of multicultural literature will equip teachers to allow for a positive way to introduce race and culture into their practice, to help promote a connection to literature, and possibly close the reading gap for students of color.

This chapter reviews professional literature in support of implementing multicultural literature in the ELA classroom to increase students of color connection to literature, engagement, and motivation, and ultimately lead to an increase in reading achievement.

What is Multicultural Literature?

Multicultural literature features different types of people from around the world, and since our culture has become increasingly more diverse in all aspects of race, religion, and sexual orientation we should incorporate diverse literature. Morgan states that:

Characteristics of multicultural literature include people of color in the position of power, females being portrayed as strong, smart, and independent, and different groups of people helping their own and not just the majority. (Morgan 5)

Morgan believes that the sense of pride minority children develop from exposure to culturally authentic books may motivate them to read more (5). Reading can be viewed as a way to get students to express themselves.

There has been a focus in the education system to allow students opportunities to express themselves. To allow open expression to happen for all students equally would require an

education movement to enrich the curriculum with multicultural literature. Garcia states that multicultural literature is an education movement:

An Educational movement built on basic American values such as freedom, justice, opportunity, and equality. It is a set of strategies aimed to address the diverse challenges experienced by rapidly changing U.S. demographics. And it is a beginning step to shifting the balance of power and privilege within the education system. (Garcia)

An educational movement that will help all students, especially those that have been historically disenfranchised, feel appreciated in the classroom. This appreciation will allow students to identify with what they read and ultimately lead to motivation and engagement with reading.

Multicultural literature can also be viewed as “mirrored reading” which means students see themselves in what they read. Mirrored reading is especially important for students of color since most of what they have read in class is of the Eurocentric canon. Smith’s concerns that “Books must mirror the lives of readers...many students related to the stories as they reflected on their lived experiences that connect their home and school identities” (qtd. in Davis). Mirrored reading can help students become motivated to read and help them connect to the literature. Cedillo states that “As educators, we must provide students with texts that reflect their respective backgrounds and engage the perspectives they bring to the classroom” (qtd. in Davis).

Why Multicultural Literature Makes Sense for Students of Color

The personal need to connect to literature attributes to one’s success in ELA. In the 21st century, there are many pieces of literature readily available to add to one’s curriculum to meet the needs of a more diverse student body. According to Room 241 Team:

In the last several years, the publishing world has seen a surge in diverse authors, characters, and stories... it's time to update the reading material in our classrooms, school libraries, and lesson plans to represent all of our learners at every level.

(Room 241 Team)

To help all students learn to the best of their abilities, teachers need to select materials that relate to their culture and heritage to maintain motivation and engagement. In agreement with Equal Read, Room 241 Team believes "... that engagement is a key factor in determining literacy success. And, teachers and librarians repeatedly note that representative literature encourages engagement in learning. Indeed, engagement is a key predictor of overall academic success." Without a connection to literature, no real learning can happen. Teachers must have the knowledge and resources readily available to help all students reach their fullest potential.

The idea of teaching about culture in school is well-intentioned but many argue that the term has gone undefined and schools are just lightly touching the surface of what it actually means. According to Lindsey "For years, education work that went under the label multicultural was well-intentioned and appropriate in orientation but superficial" (19). The need for culture is huge. Lindsey argues:

Culture is real and is a major element in all human interactions. Those that are blind to cultural diversity are blind to reality. The ugly history of America apartheid (segregation) is but one example of how hegemony plays out in education and becomes embedded in structures of schooling, root, and branch from ideology, to methodology to curriculum and assessment. (19)

Not only do teachers need to be knowledgeable of what they are teaching but how they are teaching it, and teaching with multicultural literature will bring forth the need to bring in culture into the classroom.

Selecting Multicultural Literature

Morgan contends it is imperative that there be criteria for material selection that is accurate and provides a positive view of the culture. Teachers should look for books that contain authentic cultural elements and books that provide opportunities for deeper connections and discussions. It is imperative that teachers select quality pieces and should consider the below criterion in order to be sure that the material presented is an accurate and appropriate portrayal of different cultures in a positive way (5).

The issue of selecting multicultural literature can be complex. According to K12 Reader, “The issue of selecting multicultural books for use in the classroom can be tricky because not everyone is equipped to make these value judgments about books depicting other cultures.” It is recommended that the selection process include avoiding offensive portrayals, selecting literature authored by someone from that culture, are historically accurate and relevant in themes, avoid single causes and/or solutions for inequalities, and the dialect and language reflect the culture. K12 Reader gives the advice to select quality multicultural pieces and to avoid inauthentic or poor cultural representations.

Teachers should avoid picking books with offensive language. K12 Reader suggests to avoid books with offensive expressions, negative attitudes, or stereotypical representations (par. 1). The suggestion is trusting your instincts and if you are unsure what offensive stereotypes are within a culture then K12 Reader suggests researching the negative stereotypes that are

associated with the culture. It is recommended to search through the book for the presence or absence of such stereotypes.

Teachers should always do extensive research on the author of the text. “The author of the book is from the culture being depicted. If not, be wary” (K12 Reader, par. 2). Why would it matter if the author is African American telling a story about an African American? It is because “A cultural insider is more likely to get it right” (K12 Reader, par 2). A quick guide is to check the biography to see if there is a good connection to the literature.

Always check for the historical accuracy of events being depicted. K12 states if you are unsure of the events then you need to do your research. Even if the piece is a work of fiction, “...the events, situations or objects described are plausible within the historical context of the setting and time period” (K12 Reader, par. 3).

Be sure the themes are relevant. K12 argues quality multicultural literature “... inspires, amuses, and tackles larger themes relevant to children, like coming of age or coming to terms with the past” (par. 4). This means that the characters are well-developed, memorable, and relatable. This also means that the plot makes sense and is interesting and relatable to the students’ lives. Teachers should be able to revisit this story for examples to other stories in the future.

Avoid any piece of literature that shows a single cause and/or simple solution to the world's socio-historical dilemmas of the culture being represented. K12 Reader states that “When issues of human rights and oppression are central to the story, the book addresses those issues in a way that emphasizes the dignity and resilience of people living under oppressive conditions” (par. 5). Students should be able to look at the characters as people that persevere

through hardships but also can be viewed as problem solvers and respond in a positive manner to the challenges they try to overcome.

Along with authentic events be sure the story includes language, words, phrases from the culture being represented it has cultural roots of the group being depicted. K12 Reader suggests it provides realism and shows respect for the culture. If the story is a southern urban family, then the language would not be as formal as characters from The Great Gatsby. The use of slang, dialect, or phrasing provides realism and shows respect for the culture (K12 Reader, par. 6). Cultural roots are also present. K12 Reader states:

The book is explicit and precise about the cultural roots of the group being depicted. For example, for books depicting Caribbean characters, the author avoids vague references to “island people” and “island culture,” and rather, names and accurately represents the specific Caribbean country the character(s) comes from. (par. 7)

Teachers can easily see this by noting the names of the characters in the story. If the characters’ names are more Americanized or names from other cultures, then chances are the story is not authentic.

Be sure the books do not show one group of people being superior or better than the other group. According to K12 Reader, the books should not “... set different cultures or groups in opposition to each other” (par. 8). Joseph Bruchac believes in avoiding “The Dances with Wolves Syndrome” — books in which all Indians are noble and all white people are bad” (qtd. in K12 Reader, par. 8). This is extremely important so that groups do not feel like a group of people are below or better than another group. This can also make things uncomfortable to other cultures not present in the story.

Ensure the story reflects the values of the culture being depicted and acknowledges the diverse experiences within a cultural group. This would be the ideals and/or beliefs within the cultural group consider being important (K12 Reader, par. 9). An example would be Italian or Hispanic cultures focus on the importance of bringing the family together. The book should also depict a setting that makes sense (K12 Reader, par. 10). An example would be that an experience of an African American in the inner city and how the situations do not necessarily parallel those in rural settings, or African Americans living in the North versus the South regions of America. According to K12 “A good multicultural book shows an awareness of such differences” (par. 10).

Benefits of Multicultural Literature in the ELA Classroom

There are several benefits to implementing multicultural literature. It promotes self-worth, engages students in meaningful issues, provides knowledge about different cultures, gives different perspectives on similar situations each culture may go through, teaches how to solve problems, and motivates students to read. According to Evans, teachers using multicultural literature have found an increased level of self-esteem among students of color and promote tolerance among diverse students. Enhancing self-esteem will increase students’ connection to literature and increase their self-worth. Boles believes multicultural literature allows for an “... increase sense of self-worth in students, achievement of educational equity, cultural pluralism, a sense of empowerment, the ability to work in harmony with other students, and teaching from a multicultural perspective” (17). When teachers focus on self-worth in their students, they are teaching them resilience, and resilience equips them with the critical skills needed to succeed in the real world. According to the National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME), implementing multicultural literature “helps students develop a positive self-concept by

providing knowledge about the histories, cultures, and contributions of diverse groups” (NAME). Helping students develop a positive self-concept will help them reach for academic and social success. When students create a positive self-concept, it allows them to connect with others and their culture on a deeper level. This can help shape cultural identity. This is extremely important for students of color, who are not normally represented in literature. African American students who have been misrepresented or underrepresented in literature have the opportunity to feel connected to something. This would also help with motivating students.

Motivating students to read is another advantage of incorporating multicultural literature into the curriculum. According to Pan, “Students learn best and are most motivated when curriculum validates and reflects their cultural experiences and perspectives” (5). If students can identify with the cultural experiences and perspectives in a story they are more apt to want to read. Students also benefit from learning about other cultures and ways of living, as they can gain perspectives with similar situations. Students can then take a look at their own values and think about situations they have been in comparison. This would expose students into seeing that there is more than one way of doing something. This can also expose students to issues such as racism, sexism, and prejudices. According to McCowan:

Throughout reading this type of information, students become aware of these things and will be more apt to figure out a way to eliminate and solve these problems. Students can also be exposed to cultures that they are not exposed to on an everyday basis and this will allow them to appreciate life experiences and expand their thinking of the world around us.

An additional benefit of implementing multicultural literature allows minority students to feel recognized when their culture is present in the curriculum. According to Davis research suggests that:

When black students are in classroom settings that utilize mainstream literature to practice or enforce literacy skills, face a cultural disconnection that blocks their ability to use their own culture or socially based experiences to construct meaning of the content- further hindering their literacy skills... (7)

It is not surprising that minority students feel disconnected to books from the canon. The literary canon is a collection of books that society at one point has set as foundational. Books like *Of Mice and Men* by Steinbeck, *Romeo and Juliet* by Shakespeare, and *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller are among the many that are continued to be taught at the secondary level. Each book has universal themes but they show very few characters that are from cultures outside of European descent or portray minorities of importance to such universal themes/ideas. According to Room 241 Team, "Reading the classics is wonderful, but solely providing stories about unrecognizable characters in time periods long past restricts the interconnection and inspiration our young people can and should feel from reading." The literary canon has very few books written by minorities and/or they lack a diversity of culture represented in the story. While these books do teach universal messages that most young adults can connect to, it is not enough for students of color to connect with literature as a whole. The Room 241 Team is in agreement with Kondor:

Diverse books are an essential component of increasing reading achievement for all students because of engagement. As humans, we seek out and enjoy connections. Students must have the opportunity to engage in texts that relate to their experiences, their cultures, and their interests. (qtd. in Room 241 Team)

With the implementation of multicultural literature or diverse pieces into the curriculum, minority students have a better chance to feel connected to what they read. It also teaches students of the mainstream, or not of the minority, about other cultures and perspectives and can see how there are many different ways of doing things. Learning that there are many different ways to look at an event or problem enhances critical thinking which can lead to higher levels of reading proficiency.

Critical thinking is another benefit of multicultural literature. Garcia states multicultural literature goals become about “Encouraging critical thinking.” English teachers can encourage critical thinking by implementing journal entries that ask students to connect what they have read to their own lives. This can, in turn, deepen a student’s understanding of who they are and where they fit in the world. McCowan states that “Through reading and writing this type of material students gain a deeper appreciation of who they are and who the people are around them. They are able to develop critical thinking skills, empathy, and self- worth.”

One of the most prevalent benefits of introducing multicultural literature is that it can promote a positive culture within the classroom. According to Boles, “Multicultural literature also creates a community within the classroom because students learn not only the differences tolerated, they are also embraced. This will help to cut down on the bullying and teaching that takes place in the classroom. Students will be better able to work harmoniously in groups”

(11). Cultural understanding creates empathy which also creates a cultivating atmosphere for all students. According to McKinney, “When students’ basic needs, such as their sense of safety, are met, they are more likely to reach outside their comfort zone to take academic risks necessary to grow and learn.” When students feel comfortable within the classroom they can then trust their

peers and teachers, so they are able to express their ideas and beliefs freely. This is what all students need, they need to be able to take academic risks so that they can learn and grow.

Ways to Implement Multicultural Literature

Implementing multicultural literature is imperative to support learning for all students in the classroom. Garcia recommends integrating a diverse reading list that demonstrates the universal human experience across cultures. This means doing research and using the above-mentioned criterion to choose quality diversified pieces of literature. Teachers can choose to do this in literary circles and/or do an independent reading with these types of texts (Garcia). If students find books that mirror them, they may be able to connect to the literature and be motivated to complete the reading task. The Room 241 Team suggests the following books: *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas, *The Sun is Also a Star* by Nicola Yoon, *Piecing Me Together* by Renée Watson, *The Dangerous Art of Blending In* by Angelo Surmelis, and *To All the Boys I've Loved Before* by Jenny Han. Garcia also suggests implementing multicultural literature by supplementing your curriculum with current events and news stories outside the textbook. Supplementing your curriculum will allow students to draw parallels between the distant experiences of the past and the world today. One can do this through the use of articles from readworks.org or newsela.com. According to Sanders these resources "... allow students to read the same text, regardless of their level of comprehension... and these sites also make reading more engaging, provide you with lesson tips and supplemental materials that can be printed or viewed online." These sources are also up to date and culturally relevant for all students.

Another great way to implement diverse cultural reading in the classroom is through researching about a particular culture. Reachout.com suggests to "Do a spot of research online

or through books, and study some of the history and traditions of other cultures.” Learning from outside of one’s group or the mainstream can help with global awareness and comparing to one’s self-identity. Another way to implement multicultural literature is through poetry. According to *Use Poetry to Teach About Identity* “poetry can help students explore and connect with issues of identity, group membership, and belonging, as well as provide models and inspiration for how they might tell their own stories.” They suggest using poetry by Jonathan Rodríguez, Sujata Bhatt, and Rita Joe. All of those poems have to do with exploring challenges with trying to find themselves in a world of multiple cultures (Use of Poetry to Teach About Identity). “Use of Poetry to Teach about Identity” also suggest using read-aloud strategies as hearing a poem read aloud multiple times can be beneficial to students. They also suggest having students process each poem with a question or journal entry and pair it with a discussion. (Use of Poetry to Teach about Identity). Students may use this activity to show themselves and teachers what is important to them. Teachers can adjust lessons or supplement poems to help connect student interests.

The Problem with Implementing Multicultural Literature

When a curriculum is set in a school district it may be difficult for teachers to implement any changes. According to Garcia, “Unfortunately, multicultural education is not as easy as a yearly heritage celebration or supplemental unit here and there. Rather, it requires schools to reform traditional curriculum.” The reality is that public schools have a set curriculum with little room of changing it on a yearly basis and with the current common core standards it is almost impossible to change; however, with a new set of standards rolling out called The Next Generation Standards. It seems likely that teachers will be able to implement more diverse pieces. According to Kenmore and Materazzo the Next Generation English Standards have

“Specific changes include making writing standards more “user-friendly” for teachers, merging some reading standards, and fostering standards for students to build lifelong reading and writing skills” and the new standards aim to “balance literary and informational reading and to ensure students read both full-length texts and shorter pieces, as well as to encourage reading for pleasure.” Being able to focus on encouraging reading for pleasure means teachers will be able to make decisions as to what that means. According to NAME, since multicultural literature:

... advocates the belief that students and their life histories and experiences should be placed at the center of the teaching and learning process and that pedagogy should occur in a context that is familiar to students and that addresses multiple ways of thinking. In addition, teachers and students must critically analyze oppression and power relations in their communities, society, and the world.

While many dreaded the common core standards it seems the Next Generation Standards are being praised for being written by teachers in New York State. Korn reports “These new standards were developed by teachers in New York with an eye towards that” (qtd in. Kenmore and Materzazzo).

As well as a lack of being able to make big changes to the curriculum, Pan believes it is difficult for teachers to implement multicultural literature is because of the lack of knowledge teachers have on other cultures or what is considered quality diverse literature. Pan believes the reason so many educators struggle with implementing diverse literature is that “...because of lack of knowledge, genuine educational and societal support, and good teaching materials” (5). Many teachers have the desire to implement multicultural literature but do not have the resources to find the material. Whenever I asked my administrators about support, they often told me that our

students should focus on the classics because we are a college preparatory school and students will need the classics to be prepared.

Conclusion

Multicultural literature has numerous benefits for all students, but especially for students of color. Educators, school administrators, and board members should be focusing on how to help each student achieve success. One way to ensure success is by making curriculum relevant and connectable to students' daily lives. In order to meet the needs of each student, teachers should implement multicultural literature to help all students connect to literature, and motivate all students to become lifelong readers.

Chapter Three: Application

Solution to developing active, engaged, and motivated 21st century youths of color to become better readers.

Reading is a necessary skill for success in life. No matter what profession one has, he/she will need to know how to read. In order to be a successful reader, one must practice reading. For 21st century youths of color, reading is often a struggle. Statistical findings by the NAEP suggests that youths of color reading proficiency are much lower in comparison to their white and Asian peers (NAEP). In order to get better at reading, students must practice it, but students who are struggling readers are often disengaged and unmotivated to practice reading.

The question then becomes how do we get students who are often marginalized to want to read? Guthrie and McRae believe that "... when the classroom encourages the powerful motivations for reading, students acquire proficiency steadily and predictably." If we can get students motivated to read and put forth effort into working on their reading, they essentially become better readers. Since reading is a necessary skill for success in life, then it is extremely important to find what motivates youths of color to read.

What motivates a group of students may vary, but the best way to understand what students generally want is to get to know their likes and dislikes about books. Through a discussion I lead with 20 African American ninth-grade students, I learned that students felt that their classroom texts and lessons were boring, outdated, and not relatable to their lives. They explained that the texts they are used to reading are generally about white people who do not live in areas as they do and, because of this, they cannot see themselves in the texts. They often said they felt disconnected from what they were given to read and any multicultural texts they were given were about the same people they have read for years (Maya Angelou, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.) This suggests that if we want 21st-century youths of color to read, then texts need to be interesting, current, and relatable.

What 21st century youths of color are dealing with is a result of the educational practices that were set in place in the 20th century. According to Wall, in the 20th century after desegregation, many teachers felt that talking about race was a taboo. Nobody talked about issues of race. It was basically an assimilation project, where you bring in students of color to schools that were usually predominantly white. And the whole project was about assimilating them into these white middle-class norms and ways of seeing the world (Wall). Assimilating students of color into white culture meant they were reading books with white characters as the

main focus. Students complain about reading the same type of books today will not help all students see themselves. This way of teaching, especially using books from the literary canon, was not good enough for youths of color in the 20th century and it will not be good enough for youths of color in the 21st century. We now face a time in society where the classroom population is much more diverse. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), “By 2023, students of color will represent nearly 55 percent of K-12 students in public schools (NCES). Teachers must be equipped to work with and teach students how to see themselves in what they are learning; therefore, it is suggested that multicultural literature be implemented.

Research suggests that we need contemporary multicultural pieces of literature in the curriculum so that all students can identify with what they are reading. Garcia states that multicultural literature is an educational movement that will help all students, especially those that have been historically disenfranchised, feel appreciated in the classroom. The idea is that students want to be able to make a connection to the text. Since youths of color feel a disconnect from their reading, becoming disengaged readers. Becoming disengaged and unmotivated to read can result in a stagnant reading comprehension level, which means that students are falling behind. We cannot continue to allow youths of color to continuously fall behind; therefore, it must become the responsibility of the teacher to ensure that all youths’ needs regarding their culture and interests be taken into consideration when planning classroom instruction.

The reading selection must be a priority when it comes to getting students motivated to read. With the plethora of multicultural literature, it seems as though teachers would have an easier time transitioning from a European framed curriculum to a more diverse framed curriculum; however, the challenges for current educators is that they have little experience,

resources, or ability to change the curriculum into a more diverse setting. What are some ways teachers can implement a multicultural lens through reading? In this chapter, you will see a mini-unit on how to implement multicultural literature that will help youths of color become engaged and motivated to become better readers.

How did I do it? I started by having several discussions with the same group of students mentioned above. I learned that youths of color want to read about topics they find interesting, people that go through problems or conflicts like them, and texts that sound like them. To tackle the first of the requests, I had students tell me what topics they felt were interesting and genuinely wanted to learn more about. We discussed the possibilities of topics. They wanted to read about music but more particularly rap artists. They wanted to read about people that looked like them, grew up in an urban area, and have gone through struggles. They also wanted to learn about their culture. I then had to take this list of topics and find contemporary texts that met their interests and expectations.

What I found to suit all of these requests followed more of a focus by utilizing Afrocentric literature with a few examples of multicultural literature. The examples include *The Tao of Wu* by Wu-Tang Clan, quotes by famous rapper, RZA, the short story *Everyday Use* by Alice Walker, a non-fiction article on the history of Step dancing, short stories by Walter Dean Myers, Carmen Tafolla, and Ann Dunn. All of these examples were written by and about African Americans, Hispanics, and Native Americans and their cultures. Each selection of literature was tested through a set criterion to prove its authenticity. I focused on the topics students deemed interesting and were related to their lives. I also decided to incorporate dance into this mini-unit as multicultural education requires a look at many dimensions and almost every culture has an identifiable dance. I felt this would expand student interest and motivate

them to complete their own research in preparation for their unit's final assessment. The overall effect it had on students was they all were actively engaged in the readings, were fully motivated to complete all assignments, and reflected that it made them want to continue to do research and read more about such topics. The results of choosing contemporary Afrocentric and multicultural literature and pairing it with their topics of interests showed an increased motivation to read and be active and engaged readers for more than 90% of each class. +

The following pages illustrate a mini-unit for ninth grade. The school setting is an urban charter school in the city of Rochester, NY, where the majority student population is African American. This mini-unit consists of eight consecutive 45-minute lesson plans that adhere to the Next Generation English Standards for grades nine through ten. This mini-unit is part of a larger unit that is titled "Building and Communicating Knowledge" in which students will finish with completing a research paper on a true crime. Although I have not provided the unit in its entirety, I have chosen to include substantial lessons that are part of the unit assessment of students' ability to select and analyze evidence, write a clear claim, and cite sources appropriately. The examples used throughout the unit are Afrocentric and multicultural to maintain relevancy. This will help students connect with each text to make lessons engaging and motivate students into reading.

On day one, students will be introduced to famous rapper RZA and rap group Wu-Tang Clan. The objective will be to analyze the quotation to be able to compare/contrast the message to their lives. On day two, the objective will be to analyze quotations from RZA to come up with his message (central idea) on identity. The class will engage in group work, independent analysis, and reflection. On days three through four, students will read the short story "Everyday Use" by Alice Walker and will follow each character's development throughout the reading to

determine the central idea. On day five, students will learn about the history of step dance. Students will read an article about the history of step, have a discussion about other cultural dances, and practice a step by watching and practicing through a YouTube tutorial video. This will lead to an enriched discussion about cultural dances. On days six through seven, students will be put into groups of three and given a cultural dance to research. Students will create a short google slideshow to present to their class by finding the history of the dance, find a video clip to show an example of the dance, be given extra credit if they show the class a few dance moves, and then present their findings. This follows the unit's theme of reading to build and communicate knowledge. On days eight through ten, students will read short stories by Walter Dean Myers, Carmen Tafolla, and Anne Dunn in literature circles. They will be focused on writing objective summaries, which fits with the goal of reading to communicate. This will ultimately lead to an understanding of the importance of building knowledge through research, analysis, and communication. Following this mini-unit, students will be introduced to the true crime genre. They will read articles, book reviews, excerpts from *The Wizard of Lies* by Diana Henriquez, which will ultimately lead to their own research of a true crime case. The final assessment will be to write an argumentative essay in which students will analyze evidence to support their claim, address and refute the opposing claim, and cite sources appropriately.

Each lesson within this mini-unit consists of differential supports, means of assessment (both formal and informal), integrated technology, and scaffolding to support the various learning abilities within an inclusive classroom. Each lesson includes an anticipatory set/warm up, guided and independent learning, peer collaboration, and closure of the lesson. Additionally, these lessons focus on motivating students to learn to build communicate knowledge through reading, writing, speaking, and listening. All students' needs and learning styles are being met

within this entire unit due to the variation of instructional styles and resources made available. I provide a positive learning environment by encouraging an active learning approach where each person is responsible for their own success. I pair up students based on a traditional model, where I combined students with higher reading levels with students at lower reading levels, as well as focused on combining natural leaders with followers and presenters. The task of researching, interpreting, creating, and analyzing texts are all challenging concepts, so providing an encouraging community within the classroom is important. These lessons demonstrate a mini-unit that adheres to motivating and engaging 21st-century youths of color to become better readers. For instance, the entire unit is utilizing an approach to using Afrocentric and multicultural literature to maintain cultural relevancy. This approach to reading allows students to see themselves in their learning, which should ultimately lead to natural engagement and motivation to read and learn. Collaboration is encouraged within most activities by encouraging discussion and support among peers for various activities. Technology is implemented to keep activities relevant and utilize tools students are comfortable using, as well as pushing students to learn new ways to use tools they are familiar with. Most of the time, students are the ones making the decisions of what is important to reveal about the topic.

These lessons provide 21st-century youths of color reasons to be motivated and engaged with reading, while still adhering to the new set of learning standards through The Next Generation English Standards for grades nine through ten. Students still comprehend complex texts and information but the texts were purposely selected with the interests of students in mind with a multicultural approach to help motivate students to become better readers. Overall, throughout this mini-unit, students will continue to learn how to build and communicate knowledge through the implementation of Afrocentric and multicultural literature. After the

completion of these lessons, students will continue on with lessons on true crime. Students will then be assessed on their ability to determine relevant information by researching and analyzing information to determine facts about their chosen true crime. All throughout this mini-unit, students will be engaged and motivated to read and build knowledge to communicate through various activities, as well as being encouraged to enjoy a diverse cultural experience.

Day One**Subject: RZA****Teacher: Rapp**

<u>Part 1</u> <i>What will the students learn?</i>	Next Generation English Standards Grade 9/10: R2, W5
	Unit Essential Question: How does one build and communicate knowledge through reading?
	Lesson Essential Question: According to RZA, what should one do to understand their identity?
	KNOW: How to annotate and analyze, who RZA/ Wu-Tang are, what analysis means, what an interview is. UNDERSTAND: (concept) You must fall (or fail) to improve yourself. BE ABLE TO DO: (skill) Interpret RZA's quote to understand the message and compare/contrast personal experiences to RZA's message
<u>Part 2</u> <i>Assessment</i> What will students do to show that they have learned? How good is "good enough"?	(Tool to demonstrate above) Compare/Contrast journal entry (Criterion) Students will be able to give me one example as to how RZA's message either relates or does not relate to their own lives. 1 point for successfully completing an assignment. 0 points for not completing.
<u>Part 3</u> <i>What is the Objective?</i>	Objective: (Formed from the information above) Given a journal entry, students will demonstrate an understanding of analysis, by (skill) comparing/contrasting RZA's message to their own experiences at a 90 % rate.
<u>Step by Step Narrative</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Students walked into the classroom and took a bell work from the front table· On bell work, students were asked to identify a famous rapper that they know of and give any information that they have about him/her.· Students were asked to share responses on bell work. This creates a nice discussion about different rap artists that students like and to possibly find common interests.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Students were then asked if they know who Wu-Tang Clan is (discussion as a whole class to build knowledge) · To get students motivated to learn and read about the group and RZA, I had them listen to a song C.R.E.A.M by Wu-Tang Clan · Students were then given a radio show transcript to read together · We listened to the transcript being read by the interviewer and RZA · Students are then taught a mini-refresher on how to analyze · We analyzed the first quote by RZA together · Students then completed a personal journal entry on comparing/contrasting their own experiences to RZA's message · I asked and encouraged sharing of journal entries. If students were afraid to share or did not want to share, I read my journal entry aloud to close the class.
<u>Materials</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · YouTube-Music Video C.R.E.A.M Wu-Tang Clan · Internet access · TV Screen · Google slides with notes · Handouts · Interview handouts · Interview record · Pen/Pencil/Paper
<u>Differentiation</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Students with IEP's that need additional support are given copies of notes from teachers Google slideshow to easily follow along. This is especially helpful for struggling note takers. I played the music video to help with later analysis. There is a Consultant teacher in the room for additional clarification when needed. All students will receive teacher assistance and check in during independent and group work.
<u>Post Teacher Reflection</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Students were genuinely excited about this topic and everyone had a rapper that they could identify. Some did not have information on their rapper other than the songs they sang/created. I encouraged them to learn more if they could. · Not one student said Wu-Tang Clan or RZA · At least two students per class could give class information on Wu- Tang Clan but nobody could identify RZA but students were able to gather information about RZA through the listening of the radio interview. Students seemed to like this part. · The mini-lesson was just enough for students as a quick review. They had previously done a unit on analyzing short

	<p>stories so they had a good feel for it. I would keep the mini-lesson just to ensure students understand expectations of analysis.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The analysis of the quote seemed to engage students in most of the entire lesson. They often said things like “yeah, I get that” or “yeah, I like what he’s saying”. · The journal entry was a good ending to class. It didn’t put pressure on students to complete another analysis and even had them asking to do more. · Overall, the class was a success, 100% engagement in the listening/reading of the interview and activity to analyze. <p>-Students reported liking today’s lesson and found the interview interesting</p>
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Day One Bell Work

Name a famous rap artist and list any information that you know about him/her

Old School Rap- Questions for discussion

What is Wu-Tang Clan? Who is RZA?

answer during class Wu-Tang Clan is a rap group made up of members from NYC. They were known as one of the most influential rap groups of all time. Many of their songs messages were about living life in the city, poverty, drugs, etc. The group formed in the early 90's. RZA is one of the members of Wu-Tang Clan.

Watch the music video and listen to the lyrics of the song C.R.E.A.M by Wu-Tang Clan and write down two to three sentences of what the song is about.

Students example“C.R.E.A.M stands for Cash rules everything around me. You can’t let money rule your life. We (African Americans) focus on getting money because many of us growing up in the city don’t really have it. Many of us do what we need for money”

Day One -Interview and Directions

Directions: Listen to interview-Learn background information about RZA and what The Tao of Wu is.

<https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=113928467>

As we are listening to the interview please underline important information and/or make annotations in the margins

Write a 4 sentence summary as to what The Tao of Wu is about.



If you live through defeat, you are not defeated. If you are beaten but acquire wisdom, you have won. Lose yourself to improve yourself. Only when we shed all self-definition do we find who we really are.

— RZA —

AZ QUOTES

RZA Quote-Interpret/Analyze together Day One

If you don't know yourself, you don't know your nature. If you don't know your nature, you don't know where to exist. By knowing your nature, knowing yourself, you know what to be and how to live. And that only comes from knowledge of self, knowing yourself.

What is RZA telling us?

Student Sample- “RZA believes that you have to really know who you truly are before you can live your best life. You have to have knowledge of yourself, which means you should take a step back and think about who you truly are. Other people can't tell you who you are, only you know who you are.”

Journal Entry-Day One

Write a journal response to the following prompt:
How does RZA's quote compare or contrast to your own life experiences? Minimum of 5 sentences.

“I don't really know who I am. People tell me I am funny but I don't think that I really am. How would I know if I am funny if someone doesn't tell me this? RZA's quote makes it seem easy to know who you really are but I don't think it's this easy. I think that you need to learn by mistakes.”

Date: Day Two

Subject: RZA

Teacher: Rapp

<u>Part 1</u> <i>What will the students learn?</i>	Standards: W5, R2
	Unit Essential Question: How do you use reading to build and communicate knowledge?
	Lesson Essential Question: What is RZA's overall message (or the central idea) about identity?
	<p>KNOW: How to annotate, who RZA/Wu-Tang are, what analysis means, what an interview is, how to use pieces of evidence within one quote</p> <p>UNDERSTAND: (concept) It is important to know yourself in and out, to know your values, morals, and beliefs, so that you can become your truest self.</p> <p>BE ABLE TO DO: (skill) Analyze the central idea/message of RZA's philosophy on identity.</p>
<u>Part 2</u> <i>Assessment</i>	<p>(Tool to demonstrate above) exit ticket – Based on these quotes, what is RZA's overall message (central idea) about identity?</p> <p>(Criterion) Students will have to supply evidence from at least two of the quotes and analysis from at least two of their quotes to support their central idea. 2 points for evidence, 2 points for central idea. MUST get all 4 points to have mastered it.</p>
<u>Part 3</u> <i>What is the Objective?</i>	<p>Objective: (Formed from the information above)</p> <p>Given an exit ticket, students will demonstrate an understanding of RZA's main message about identity, by analyzing at a 90 % rate.</p>
<u>Step by Step Plans (Narrative)</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Students walked into the class and completed the bell work: Who is RZA? Why are we looking quotations by him?· We had a class discussion on bell work· I explained the plans and goal for today· Students were put into assigned groups (4 to a group)· Each group was given a quote by RZA (each quote is also on the back windows in dry erase marker)· Groups read their quote and came up with a group analysis of what the quote means.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Once the analysis was approved by the teacher, students wrote it on the window with the dry erase marker. · After each group wrote out the analysis on the window. Each individual student completed a gallery walk by looking at each quote on the window, reading the analysis, and then either agreeing or disagreeing with the interpretation. · If students agreed with analysis they put a tally mark under agree; if they disagreed they put a tally mark under that column. · After the gallery walk we looked at the tally totals and discussed the outcome. We also discussed why others disagreed with the quotations and what their analysis of the quote was in comparison/contrast. · Students completed an exit ticket-which quote had the best meaning? And why? Could you relate this back to your life? · We had a final discussion about the exit tickets
<u>Resources used</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Directions-handout · Dry erase markers · Pen/pencil
<u>Differentiation</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Steps are broken down for group work on board · For kinesthetic learners, the dry erase markers/gallery walk was set in place · For visual learners-the handouts/directions on board · For the auditory learners-the directions were read, restated, and simplified · All students will receive teacher assistance and check in during independent and group work.
<u>Post Teacher Reflection</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Students understood that we were looking at quotes from RZA because they wanted to read about famous rappers. They wanted to know why I did not choose someone current. My response was that RZA had been one of the original rap artists back in the 1990s when Rap was starting to grow. His messages are much more 9th grade friendly compared to some of the new artists. Students seemed to understand (or at least agreed that some of their current music is just about sex and drugs) · Students did not like being put into predetermined groups but appreciated that I kept each person with at least one friend that they felt comfortable with. · Students liked the quotes that were given to them · Students were easily able to analyze the quotes · Students loved the gallery walk but were often talking to friends on the way so unsure if the agree/disagree was based on peer pressure. If I were to do this again, I would have students listen to the analysis being read aloud and then having them close their eyes and raising a hand if

	<p>they agreed with it. This may show me a more accurate opinion and take peer pressure out of it.</p> <p>· Students liked completing exit tickets but had a hard time continuing to discuss prior to the end of class. It appears that many do not like to voice their opinion if unsure of their answers. Maybe showing how it is ok to voice opinions prior to this lesson may help prevent this next time.</p> <p>-Motivation appeared to be at a 90% but 100% engagement during the gallery walk.</p>
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Bell Work -Day Two-

Who is RZA? What is the Tao of Wu? Why are we looking at this in class?

Student sample "RZA is a rapper from Wu-Tang Clan. The Tao of Wu is a book about being at peace with yourself. We are learning this because we have to read stuff"

Quotes in groups-Day Two-

1. "Confusion is a gift from God. Those times when you feel most desperate for a solution, sit. Wait. The information will become clear. The confusion is there to guide you. Seek detachment and become the producer of your life."
2. "It's harder to make the glass than break the glass."
3. "Life comes when you have knowledge, wisdom, and understanding, when you can see for real, touch, and feel for real, know for real. Then you are truly living."
4. "Happiness-- which is total and complete satisfaction with yourself. This means you realize that nothing and nobody else can make you happy. Happiness is something you get from yourself. If you're completely satisfied with yourself, nobody can take it away from you."

Quote/Group Work-Day Two- Student Sample

What # is your quote?

#2

What do you think your quote means?

I think it means that it is easy to ruin things or break things but very difficult to put it back together.

What evidence can you use to support your answer?

The quote uses the metaphor of breaking glass and trying to put it together. This shows that it is very difficult to fix something once you hurt it

Gallery Walk Results Day Two

Quote 1- 18 agree, 3 disagree

Quote 2- 21 agree, 0 disagree

Quote 3-21 agree, 0 disagree

Quote 4-15 agree, 6 disagree

Those that disagreed had similar analysis of each quote but did not like the explanation of the group. Given that most students agreed with each interpretation shows that students were successful in their analysis.

DATE: Day Three

Subject: “Everyday Use”

Teacher: Rapp

<u>Part 1</u> <i>What will the students learn?</i>	Standards: R1-R4, W5
	Unit Essential Question: How do you use reading to build and communicate knowledge?
	Lesson Essential Question: What actions and words of characters in the story “Everyday Use” define their character?
	<p>KNOW: How to annotate, understand what identity means, practice with identifying characteristics</p> <p>UNDERSTAND: Students determine that a character’s word choice and actions show us their personality, which is called a character trait. Students also determine that other character’s words and actions toward others will also determine traits of themselves and other characters.</p> <p>BE ABLE TO DO: analyze Dee’s character to determine at a character trait to accurately describe Dee.</p>
<u>Part 2</u> <i>Assessment</i>	<p>(Tool to demonstrate above) journal entry/exit-ticket</p> <p>(Criterion) 1 point for comparing a character that is similar to their own personal trait and 1 point for being able to explain it. Students need both points to show mastery.</p>
<u>Part 3</u> <i>What is the Objective?</i>	<p><i>Objective: (Formed from the information above)</i></p> <p>Given a journal entry/exit-ticket, students will demonstrate an understanding of character traits, by analyzing the text at a 90% rate.</p>
<u>Step by Step narrative</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Students walked into the class and completed the bell work: What are some words that describe your personality?· We had a class discussion on bell work· I explained the plans and goal for today (to read the short story and collect evidence to understand character traits)· We read the short story “Everyday Use” together with a spirit reading strategy· We stopped to annotate throughout the reading

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students then were given a character chart with three characters to look at “Mama, Dee, Maggie”. There were three boxes per character. 1 box had the character’s name, the second box asked for a quotation directly stated by the character, the third box asked for a quotation about an action the character did, and the fourth box asked about something another character said about that character or did to that character, and the fifth box was asking for a determined character trait. I explained the steps of each box and asked students if they understood what we were going to do. They said yes. We completed the chart on Mama together Students then had to complete the chart on Maggie with a partner of their choice (students had five minutes to do so) Students then came back to report findings Students were then instructed to complete the task on Dee independently. Students came back together as a group and we went over the traits students listed for Dee. I then asked several students for their evidence. Students then completed a journal entry/exit-ticket that asked which character had a trait similar to their own personal traits and why If time permitted in class, we went over the journal entries/exit-ticket
<u>Differentiation</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Language is simplified on directions For visual learners-the handouts/directions on board Peer collaboration on practice with character traits For the auditory learners-the directions were read, restated, and simplified All students will receive teacher assistance and check in during independent and group work.
<u>Materials</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internet access TV Screen Google slides with notes Handouts Pen/Pencil/Paper
<u>Post Reflection</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students would have been more successful with pre-determined partners Students were able to easily identify traits for all three characters Students liked the story and even laughed about Mama’s character traits Students would benefit from additional practice with character traits, annotations, and understanding that all characters’ actions and words can say a lot about their own character but also reveal a lot about other characters

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students were actively engaged in the reading Spirit reading was not for all students. I may try this again to determine if it is effective or a waste of time
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Day Three-Bell Work

What are some words that describe your personality?

Some examples students responded with: Strong, Stubborn, Crazy, Loving, Supportive, Loud, Quiet

Character Chart Day Three

Character	Something the character said	Something the character did	Something another character said about or did to this character	Trait you feel works best for this character
Mama (together)	"I can work outside all day, breaking ice to get water for washing"	She killed a pig with a sledge hammer	Dee tried to take blankets from Maggie but Mama said no	Hard Working Fair
Maggie (partner)				
Dee (self)				

Journal Entry (if time remained) Day Three

which character had a trait similar to their own personal traits and why

Date: Day Four

Subject: “Everyday Use”

Teacher: Rapp

<u>Part 1</u> <i>What will the students learn?</i>	Standards: R1-R4, W4
	Unit Essential Question: How do you use reading to build and communicate knowledge?
	Lesson Essential Question: What evidence shows a central idea of the short story “Everyday Use”?
	<p>KNOW: Define Annotations, identity, characteristics, central idea definition, background on what a literary analysis is and how to write one, how to use the rubric to understand their expectations of writing.</p> <p>UNDERSTAND: Evidence will differ depending on which topic and central idea students use for their literary analysis. Students understand they need at least two pieces of evidence and must follow the NYS regents part- three rubric.</p> <p>BE ABLE TO DO: Analyze the text to write a literary analysis of the short story “Everyday Use”.</p>
<u>Part 2</u> <i>Assessment</i> What will students do to show that they have learned? How good is “good enough”?	<p>(Tool to demonstrate above) Informal assessment-quick-write “What is one central idea that you believe is the strongest one found in the short story “Everyday Use” and why do you believe this? “</p> <p>Formal assessment that was sent for homework with a rubric from the NYS Regents exam</p> <p>(Criterion) Informal assessment-2 points total, students must both answer the question and give an explanation to determine if they understand the central idea</p> <p>Formal assessment- Four-point rubric. Students must receive a 3/4 to show near mastery of a concept.</p>

<p><u>Part 3</u> <i>What is the Objective?</i> Objective: (in this form)</p>	<p><i>Objective: (Formed from the information above)</i> Given a prompt and rubric, students will demonstrate an understanding of the central idea, by analyzing the text and writing a literary response at 90% rate.</p>
<p><u>Step by Step narrative</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Students walked in and took bell work from the table · Students completed bell work in the first two minutes of class · We had a discussion on bell work · Teacher waited to see if students needed a mini-lesson on the central idea but after many responses decided just to go over the bell work and all students just needed the visual Topic + Message = central idea written on the board. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We then created a class list of topics found in the short story “Everyday Use” • I then assigned students to pre-determined groups and gave each group a topic from the class list • Each group had to find three pieces of evidence and determine the central idea of their topic • After the activity, students then had to send one representative from their group to the front of the room to report to the class their findings. • Students were then given a chart they had to fill out during each report. It was stressed to students that they would use their notes for homework so it would be important and beneficial for them to listen and write their notes during each report • Students were given a quick write to complete • Students were then given a literary analysis task and rubric for homework. • Students were told they had two days to take their charts and write a literary response on one of the central ideas found in the short story “Everyday Use” • Students were given two days to complete this for homework. • To get students to prepared to complete homework assignment they were also given an exit-ticket to complete “What is one central idea that you believe is the strongest one found in the short story “Everyday Use” and why do you believe this? “

<u>Differentiation</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Language is simplified on directions · For visual learners-the handouts/directions on board · Peer collaboration on activity · For the auditory learners-the directions were read, restated, and simplified · All students will receive teacher assistance and check in during independent and group work. · Students were given a copy of notes prior to the start of class
<u>Materials</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Internet access · TV Screen · Google slides with notes · Handouts · Pen/Pencil/Paper · Copies of story
<u>Post Reflection</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Students required an example from a previous reading to understand the directions of the task · Students understood the task for the activity but did not seem to like having to pick one person to present. This turned into a punishment to present. Next time I will have students type out their report into a shared google doc so that if they feel they cannot present then I will read the information for them · Students genuinely understood at least one central idea from the short story · Students wanted to read more stories like this that dealt with identity and finding yourself · Students were not enthusiastic about writing for homework · 90% of students completed the writing assessment on time, the remaining ten percent understood the task, they just did not complete it (this is through discussion with them) · This lesson did not entirely motivate students to analyze but it did give them the motivation to get the work done in class so that the writing was easier for them to complete at home.

Day Four

What does central idea mean? How do we know what the central idea of a story is?

Class LIST OF TOPICS

Community

Family

Heritage

Needs/Wants

Standing up for oneself

Notes for struggling students -Day Four-

What is the author trying to tell us? How do we know? This is called Central Idea

Topic + Message = Central idea

How the author does this is through writing techniques. We have focused on characterization by looking at character traits.

Group Activity directions - Day Four-

Your group is assigned a topic from the story. You will need to find the central idea of the topic and two quotes to prove this.

Step 1: Talk to your group about the topic. Get a list of what everyone thinks the message is about the topic.

Step 2: Decided together which message will be the best and easiest to find evidence for.

Step 3: Everyone in your group is responsible to find one piece of evidence to prove the message your came up with. Fill in your charts.

Step 4: Be prepared to send one representative to the front of the room to report findings.

Group Chart-Day Four

Topic	Evidence 1	Evidence 2	Evidence 3	Message
Community				
Family				
Heritage				
Needs/Wants				

Quick Write- Exit-Ticket Day Four

What is one central idea that you believe is the strongest one found in the short story?

Name _____

ELA _____

“Everyday Use” by Alice Walker

Text-Analysis Response

Your Task: Closely look at the short story “Everyday Use” and write a well-developed, text-based response of **two to three paragraphs**. In your response, identify a central idea in the text and analyze how the author’s use of one writing strategy (literary element or literary technique or rhetorical device) develops this central idea. Use strong and thorough evidence from the text to support your analysis. Do not simply summarize the text. You may use the margins to take notes as you read and scrap paper to plan your response.

Guidelines: Be sure to:

- Identify a central idea in the text
- Analyze how the author’s use of one writing strategy (literary element or literary technique or rhetorical device) develops this central idea. Examples include: **characterization**, conflict, denotation/connotation, metaphor, simile, irony, language use, point-of-view, setting, structure, symbolism, theme, tone, etc.
- Use strong and thorough evidence from the text to support your analysis
- Organize your ideas in a cohesive and coherent manner
- Maintain a formal style of writing
- Follow the conventions of standard written English

Text Analysis Graphic Organizer

The central idea of the story is _____

This is the central idea because

What writing technique does the author use to show this central idea? (Literary Devices: Metaphor, simile, diction, imagery, symbolism, personification, etc.)

How does this show the central idea?

Two examples that show this are

1. _____

2. _____

Time to write!!! Helpful hints/Sentence Starters if you need them!

Introduction:

1. Hook-Draw readers in with a question (should be about the theme/central idea, you can start with a did you know the question but go back and cross off the did you know before turning in!)
2. Gist- Give me a summary of what happens in the story
3. Claim- In the poem, “ ”, Walker uses (literary device) _____ to show (central idea) _____.

Body paragraph-

1. Topic Sentence- You can see the central idea in _____ part of the story (the whole thing? Beginning, middle, end?)
2. A. You can see this when “insert quotation” and explain which literary element is being used
B. Explain the quote as to what is happening and how it relates to the central idea
3. You can see this again when “insert the second piece of evidence” and explain the literary element used
B. Explain the quote as to what is happening and how it relates to the central idea
4. Concluding statement-As you can see, _____ (central idea).

When you are done go back and check for these silly errors

1. Did you indent your first line of each paragraph?
2. Did you but a space before your punctuation ? Like this . If so please fix it to look like **this**.
3. Did you accidentally use the pronoun I in your writing (I believe; I think?) if so take that out!
4. Did you use punctuation? Did you forget to put in periods after your sentences?
5. Did you cross off the did you know part and put a period at the end (this is if you used a did you know for your hook).
6. Do you have both a central idea AND a writing technique?
7. Do you explain your evidence?
8. Do you have a concluding statement?

DATE: Day five

Subject: Step Dancing

Teacher: Rapp

<p><u>Part 1</u> <i>What will the students learn?</i></p>	<p>Standards: R1, R7, W5</p> <p>Unit Essential Question: How do you use reading to build and communicate knowledge?</p> <p>Lesson Essential Question: What does Stepping reveal about African American culture?</p> <p>KNOW: (Facts, vocab., etc.) Annotate, Analyze, culture-defined, step dancing (idea of what it is)</p> <p>UNDERSTAND: (concept) Stepping reveals that it was a way to keep the culture alive for the African American Community. It brought about to keep a way of communication for slaves. This kept from losing culture (assimilation) or traditions back home. Later it became part of college life often associated with pledging for sororities and fraternities.</p> <p>BE ABLE TO DO: (skill) Analyze the reading to understand the cultural importance of step.</p>
<p><u>Part 2</u> <i>Assessment</i> What will students do to show that they have learned? How good is “good enough”?</p>	<p>(Tool to demonstrate above) journal entry “Today you learned about Step Dancing- Dancing reveals a lot about culture. Based on that statement and evidence from the article, what do you believe Step reveals about African culture?”</p> <p>(Criterion) 1 point for answering the question with evidence from the article</p>
<p><u>Part 3</u> <i>What is the Objective?</i> Objective: (in this form)</p>	<p>Objective: (Formed from the information above) Given a journal entry, students will demonstrate an understanding of the importance of Step by analyzing the article (or at) a 90% mastery level.</p>

<p><u>Part 4</u> <u>Step by Step Directions</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Students walked into class and completed the bell work in the first two minutes of the class “What do you know about cultural dances?” · We discussed the bell work · I gave an example of my own cultural dance and how much I know about it (not much-that is the point. If we want to build knowledge we need to research, read, and communicate with one another about the topics we know about) · Together, we completed a KWL Chart on Step (the KW part) · Together we then read the short article on the history of step together (chorus reading) · Students completed the L part of the chart independently · We discussed the learned part of the chart. · We then practiced learning basic step moves through a YouTube tutorial (yes even teacher danced) · Students then had a journal entry prompt to complete ““Today you learned about Step Dancing- Dancing reveals a lot about culture. Based on that statement and evidence from the article, what do you believe Step reveals about African culture?” “ · Students then had to turn to a person near them to discuss their responses · We then had a class discussion · If there was the time I asked students how this all went back to the unit’s essential question. Students explained that they learned more through reading and communicating with one another. ·
<p><u>Resources Needed</u></p>	<p>Hand out/article, TV Screen/Google Slideshow, journal entry-exit ticket, YouTube/internet access.</p>
<p><u>Differentiation</u></p>	<p>Students were given copies of notes from the Google slideshow to easily follow along. This is especially helpful for struggling note takers, and visual and kinesthetic learners. Teacher does choral reading activity with students to ensure all students are following along. All students will receive teacher assistance and check in during independent and group work. The YouTube tutorial was picked because the language is clear and the directions are easy to follow. The tutorial was also picked because it was done by a step dance professional who is also African American to help students identify with the instructor as well as keep the activity as authentic as possible.</p>

Post Reflection

- Students enjoyed the YouTube tutorial but some felt uncomfortable dancing in front of one another
- I danced in front so that students knew that anyone could learn how to dance (and take the pressure off everyone watching one another and focusing on me making a fool of myself)
- Students enjoyed learning about this topic but had a moment where they did not want to talk about times of slavery. I addressed this issue and explained that we cannot change our past but we can certainly learn about the good that came out of it and Step dancing was something that held onto culture. Students seemed at peace with this philosophical approach but I noted that this will be a topic we need to tiptoe around in the future.
- Students were motivated to learn more about step and talk more about Step after watching the YouTube tutorial so it appears the activity motivated students to read and analyze more
- I would absolutely teach this lesson again and have started looking for area step teams to come in for a demonstration and maybe even have students create a step for a project

Day 5-Bell Work

Bell Work- What is a well known style of dance in your culture?

Day Five-Plans for today!

Literary analysis!

Choose one of the three Langston Hughes Poems. Refer back to your TPFAST and write a two paragraph literary response. Remember to include:

1. What is the central idea?
2. What is one writing strategy the writer uses to convey the central idea?
3. Two examples
4. Concluding statement

***Intro-Hook, Gist, Claim Body Paragraph-Evidence (cite), explain, conclude!

(day five) Teacher Slide

A well known dance in my culture is the Tarantella

What do I know about it? Nothing- I know nothing...and why? Because it is not something I was taught. Does this make me any less Italian?

I don't think so but after this lesson I feel compelled to learn more! Maybe you will too

(day 5) Class List of dances -bell work continued

Culture	Dance	What we know
African American	Hip Hop	Also a style of music. Skills usually involve spinning or floor work.
Hispanic	Meringue/Salsa	2 people usually dance together (in pairs), fast pace, intricate dance moves, flashy.
Pop culture/Americanized	Cha Cha Slide, Cupid Shuffle, chicken dance	Usually done at dances, get togethers, weddings, celebrations. Everyone knows these dances.

(day 5) Step-KWL Chart

Step Looks Like	What I know	What I want to know	What I have learned

Day 5-History Lesson- We will spirit read today-

1. What is Step?
2. Where did it come from?
3. Why is it important?
4. Who can learn how to step?

Stand Up and Dance! (Day 5)

Time to learn- youtube video get up and dance

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OFb0EUlkYac>

article-<https://ase.tufts.edu/aso/blackout/history.html>

Journal Entry (Day 5)

Today you learned about Step Dancing- Dancing reveals a lot about culture.
Based on that statement, what do you believe Step reveals about African culture?

DATE: Day six - seven

Subject: Multicultural dances

Teacher: Rapp

<u>Part 1</u> <i>What will the students learn?</i>	Standards: R1, R7, W5
	Unit Essential Question: How do you use reading to build and communicate knowledge?
	Lesson Essential Question: What does dance reveal about a particular culture?
	KNOW: (Facts, vocab., etc.) Annotate, Analyze, culture-defined, step dancing (idea of what it is) UNDERSTAND: (concept) Each dance will reveal something different about each culture but the general idea is that dance is an integral part of knowing the culture. It is needed to make connections to people and each dance holds a strong history in reverence in history. BE ABLE TO DO: (skill) research, read, and analyze to understand the history of their assigned dance
<u>Part 2</u> <i>Assessment</i> What will students do to show that they have learned? How good is “good enough”?	(Tool to demonstrate above) Informal assessment-check for understanding and asking each group questions about their dance as they are gathering information. Formal Assessment-Google Slideshow with assigned rubric (Criterion) rubric is 5-point rubric. Students must receive 4/5 to show near or at mastery about their assigned dance.
<u>Part 3</u> <i>What is the Objective?</i> Objective: (in this form)	Objective: (Formed from the information above) Given a rubric, students will demonstrate an understanding of the history of their dance by researching and reporting their information at a 90% mastery level.

<p><u>Part 4</u> <u>Step by Step Directions</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Day Six · Students walked into class and completed a bell work “What dance would you like to know more about?” · We discussed the bell work and many students named specific pop cultural dances. · I explained that we were going to work in teams of three and we would research the history of our given dance. We discussed the importance of research and the need to know the history behind a topic. · Students were given three options from the teacher and had to select one dance to research · We went over the directions of the Google slideshow project together · Students worked on the project in their groups gathering evidence today (each student was responsible for one slide) · Students put all information into slide form and worked on practicing their dance · Students had all videos approved by the teacher prior to adding them to their slides to present. <p>Day Seven</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Students were given 10 minutes to go over their slides and finish up any information. · I cleared their research findings · Students presented findings · Students reflected through discussion with one another and teacher
<p><u>Resources Needed</u></p>	<p>Hand out/article, TV Screen/Google Slideshow, YouTube/internet access.</p>
<p><u>Differentiation</u></p>	<p>Students were given copies of notes from the Google slideshow to easily follow along. This is especially helpful for struggling note takers, and visual and kinesthetic learners. All students will receive teacher assistance and check in during independent and group work. The YouTube videos were approved by the teacher.</p>
<p><u>Post Reflection</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Students would have been more motivated if they had more choices of dances from their own culture · Students required more direction on how to select sources so a pre-determined set of readings would have been better for a short assignment · Rubrics were designed to pass students just as long as they could complete the task and present findings

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Not many students wanted to dance in front of the class but those that did students were excited to see it · Students were engaged in the readings of the information · Students were engaged during the presentations mostly because of the videos from YouTube.
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Google SlideShow Directions Day Six/Seven

You will work in teams of three to four and be given a choice of dance to research. All students in the group are required to read and learn about the cultural dance. All students will be responsible for at least ONE slide to create.

Your dance is _____. Please read all that you can and answer the following questions

1. Where did your dance come from?
2. Which group of people/culture/race dances to this style?
3. Is your dance easy or hard to learn? Why?
4. Does your dance tell a story? If so what is it? If not, why do people like your dance?
5. Select a YouTube video (or tutorial) to show your dance to your classmates

Google slideshow rubric Days Six-Seven

5 Points	4 Points	3 Points	2 Points	1 Point
Project meets minimum requirements and is clear to read. All information is accurate. YouTube video is a good representation of the dance	Project meets minimum requirements but some slides are hard to read and not all information is clear. YouTube video is a good representation of the dance.	Project does not meet minimum requirements and some information is inaccurate. YouTube video could have been better selected	Project does not meet minimum requirements and there is very little information on each slide. No YouTube video	Project does not meet any requirements or all information is incorrect.

Presentation Follow Guide (Day Seven)

Please fill in the chart below as your fellow classmates are presenting! An example is below!

Dance	History	Fact	Video reaction
Mexican Hat Dance	The song originated when someone was being proposed to	The Mexican hat dance has changed a lot from its original format. The music is now all instrumental	Interesting dance. Not sure I would like to try it.

DATE: Days Eight-Nine Subject: Multicultural short stories Teacher: Rapp

<p><u>Part 1</u> <i>What will the students learn?</i></p>	<p>Standards: R1-R4, W3</p> <hr/> <p>Unit Essential Question: How do you use reading to build and communicate knowledge?</p> <hr/> <p>Lesson Essential Question: What makes a strong objective summary?</p> <hr/> <p>KNOW: (Facts, vocab., etc.) Annotate, Analyze, culture-defined, objective summary defined/example given.</p> <p>UNDERSTAND: (concept) A strong objective summary contains details of character's names and follows the plot structure of the story. A strong objective summary would be able to prove to someone that you read the entire story and understood the events.</p> <p>BE ABLE TO DO: (skill) Write/Create an objective summary.</p>
<p><u>Part 2</u> <i>Assessment</i></p>	<p>(Tool to demonstrate above) objective summary rubric</p> <p>(Criterion) rubric (Ten-point rubric see below)</p>
<p><u>Part 3</u> <i>What is the Objective?</i> Objective: (in this form)</p>	<p>Objective: (Formed from the information above) Given a rubric, students will demonstrate an understanding of their stories main points by creating an objective summary (or at) a 90% mastery level.</p>
<p><u>Step by Step Narrative</u></p>	<p>Day eight</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Students walked into class and completed a bell work "What can you learn about culture through stories?" · We had a discussion on the bell work and students then asked if they could read stories about living in urban areas. I told them they could and took a poll and who wanted to read stories about an African American, Native American, or Hispanic culture. · Students were then broken up into groups based on what they wanted to read about. · Students were given a copy of a short story based on their group. "Monkeyman" by Walter Dean Myers was given to the group that

	<p>wanted to read about African Americans growing up in urban areas. “Chencho’s Cow” by Carmen Tafolla was given to the group that wanted to read about Hispanic culture. “Keeper of the Hair Bowl” by Anne Dunn about Native American culture. If students did not have a preference, I assigned them into groups based on what I thought they would benefit from the most.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Students were only assigned to read their stories in their groups today. They each took turns volunteering to read parts of the story. · In the groups, students wrote down details that happened throughout the story. They kept track of details using a plot structure graphic organizer. · Students answered quick-write/exit-ticket and we discussed before they left. <p>Day nine</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Students walked in and completed bell work “list five specific events in your story that you read yesterday” · Students were taught a mini-lesson on summary and objective summary · Students were given an example of Romeo and Juliet to understand the differences. · We completed an example of an objective summary together on “The Tell-Tale Heart” so that students understood what the differences between objective summary and just a summary is. · Students then looked at the grading rubric for understanding of how they were going to be graded. · Students then graded the class written objective summary (of which it received a 100%) to understand the rubric · Students independently wrote an objective summary of their short stories · Students had an additional two days in class to complete these, edit and revise, and turn in final copies (I would like to show one more lesson in this to prove my thesis) · On the last day of this assessment (objective summary) I asked students to write a journal response to what they had learned about culture from their stories.
<u>Resources Needed</u>	Hand out/article, TV Screen/Google Slideshow, journal entry-exit ticket, YouTube/internet access.

<u>Differentiation</u>	<p>Students were given copies of notes from the Google slideshow to easily follow along. This is especially helpful for struggling note takers, and visual and kinesthetic learners. Students were put into groups based on their interest level. All readings were Lexile between 800-1200, which is slightly below and slightly above grade level. Students had the support of the consultant teacher and general education teacher throughout the process. Students were also given copies of the examples and rubric.</p>
<u>Post Reflection</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Students gravitated toward Afrocentric literature since 90% of the student population is African American. I actually encouraged my female students to read the stories by Anne Dunn and Carmen Tafolla since their stories are written from a minority females perspective and “Monkeyman” was written from a male perspective. Some students were happy to make the change while others refused. Maybe this is because they have not had the opportunity to read African American literature. · Students needed two extra days to complete the objective summaries but understood the activity and task · I would like to find more Afrocentric literature from a female perspective · All students were able to explain the plot structure of their stories · All students requested to read more short stories like these · Most students were engaged in their readings and completed the objective summary with success. The ones that did not were of lower reading levels and needed to break down their objective summaries into basic sentences. They would benefit from having each text labeled out to help with the organization of their notes (IE-identify the pages in the exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution). · It is important to note that the students that were not successful in this task wrote summaries and not objective summaries. They could benefit from doing this in smaller groups and chunking it out more. Or direct teacher supports to remind them to add in details.

Day 8 Bell Work

What can you learn about culture through stories?

Day 8-Literary Circle Stories

Short stories to read. Which do you prefer to learn about?

1. Monkeyman-African American focused (**40% of class**)
2. Chencho's Cow- Latino American focused (**40% of class mostly girls**)
3. Keeper of the Hair Bowl- Native American focused (**20% mostly unsure students**)

Day 8 plans

Discussion on Bellwork (literary circles are small groups reading the same story together to go in depth/analysis of the story)

Directions-In your small groups (where you normally sit with the group of 4) you will read the story given to you. Please fill out the graphic organizer on the next slide. You must FINISH reading today and have filled out the organizer completely.

Day 8-Literary Circles-Fill in as you read

Introduction	Middle	End
Exposition/Rising Action	Climax	Falling Action/Denouement

Day 9- Bell Work

What is a summary? What is an objective?

Day 9-Summary Versus Objective Summary

Summary-Usually 1-3 sentences that gives the GIST of the story. It usually lacks many details (hence it being short).

Objective means “not influenced by personal feelings or interpretation.” A summary is a short statement that gives the main points or ideas of something. So an objective summary is a short statement or paragraph that tells what something is about but does not include irrelevant details or your opinions. HINT: An objective summary should not be written in the first person (“I”) voice.

Day 9-Example- “The Tell Tale Heart”

Summary-The story is about a crazy narrator that wanted to kill this old man because his eye looked gross. He stalked him for days and eventually killed him. The police showed up and he eventually confessed to his crime.

Day 9-Objective Summary- “The Tell Tale Heart”

"The Tell-Tale Heart" is a short story by Edgar Allan Poe first published in 1843. It follows an unnamed narrator who insists on his sanity after murdering an old man with a "vulture eye". The murder is carefully calculated, and the murderer hides the body by cutting it into pieces and hiding it under the floorboards. Ultimately the narrator's guilt manifests itself in the hallucination that the man's heart is still beating under the floorboards.

It is unclear what relationship, if any, the old man and his murderer share. It has been suggested that the old man is a father figure or, perhaps, that his vulture eye represents some sort of veiled secret. The ambiguity and lack of details about the two main characters stand in stark contrast to the specific plot details leading up to the murder.

The story was first published in James Russell Lowell's *The Pioneer* in January 1843. "The Tell-Tale Heart" is widely considered a classic of the Gothic fiction genre and one of Poe's most famous short stories. It has been adapted or served as an inspiration for a variety of media.

Chapter Four: Conclusions and Recommendations

Many teachers lack the inclusive instructional skills to teach all 21st Century youth who require a much more diversified curriculum to connect with what they are learning. Traditional ELA classrooms have a set curriculum following the literary canon classics. While these stories are empowering, teach universal themes, and are well known, they can no longer stand as the option for all literature in the ELA classroom. The 21st-century classroom is more diverse now compared to the 20th century. Youths of color are still significantly behind their white and Asian peers when it comes to reading proficiency. Research suggests that youths of color feel they cannot connect to what they are reading in class. The connection one has to literature attributes to success in ELA. Without such a connection, no real learning can happen. To help students of color connect with literature and to view a purpose within their learning, teachers need to add literature selections where students feel connected and motivated to read. For youths of color, the answer is multicultural literature.

Multicultural literature features different types of people from around the world. The difference between the literary canon and multicultural literature are the characteristics; such as the inclusion of people of color in the positions of power, females being portrayed as strong, smart, and independent, and different groups of people helping their own and not just the majority (Morgan 5). Morgan believes that the sense of pride minority children develop from exposure to culturally authentic books may motivate them to read more. If we want all students to have a positive self-identity and learn from what they are reading, then we need to choose literature that represents who they are. Our classrooms have become increasingly more diverse in all aspects of race, religion, and sexual orientation so the need to help students see themselves in what they learn is extremely important.

We need to make a change today because what we have been teaching is not good enough to bridge the reading achievement gap for youths of color. Instead of revamping all curriculum, we need to find a healthy balance of what we have taught in the past and what we feel will work for the future. Take for instance the literary canon. The literary canon does hold value and shows benefits such as an increased vocabulary, higher level thinking, exposure to past cultures and civilizations, theater, as well as it prepares students for many allusions they will hear, see, and read about in their adult lives. While beneficial, the literary canon does not alone motivate students or keep them engaged in their readings. Telling students they will be reading a story from 5th century B.C. that deals with a scenario they have never encountered (or may never encounter) just does not make sense to teach to struggling or turned off readers. Students need and yearn to learn about what is happening now, what interests them, why the world is the way it is, and to know more about their own cultures. This is extremely important for minority students who have been disenfranchised for so long. Youths of color don't seem to learn about their own culture, identity, and values in the literature that they read in ELA and this sends mixed messages about their self-worth. The goal is to pick an array of texts that represent all cultures to promote a positive reading experience for all students to become better readers. The question then becomes how do we select such texts.

Teachers should select texts by looking for authenticity, starting with looking at the author's background to be sure they are from the culture and/or race from which the book's perspective is viewed. The words in the text should be the language, slang, or phrases used within that culture, and the text should avoid offending other races/cultures. The criterion for finding authentic multicultural texts is a lot easier than one might think. Looking up book reviews, information on the author, even using websites such as goodreads.com make selecting

authentic multicultural texts easier to find. There are so many options for all students to view themselves in what they read, so what happens when you implement readings that are of multicultural literature?

Multicultural literature actually works to help students become motivated and engaged to become better readers. With the examples provided from Chapter Three, I feel if multicultural does anything for our students, it makes the reading experience much more enjoyable. When something is fun or exciting, then students tend to want to read it. What also helped the motivation and engagement was that I listened to my group of students. I asked them what they wanted. To give students options and make them part of the process is extremely important. To take into consideration their wants and interests while selecting multicultural texts will only help with their motivation to read. My results were not extreme, but more signals of a motivation to continue to learn. After my mini-unit, I had a higher turn-in rate of homework, students requesting more of what we were learning, and students teaching me about topics they had researched. I found that making students feel included in their learning, finding texts that represent what they want and need, and picking contemporary pieces leads to an increased motivation to read. There is no single answer but multicultural literature is a solid foundation to start making a change.

I would like to continue to research the titles of multicultural literature that have been taught and shows benefits for youths of color. I want to find multicultural pieces that can not only serve as a substitute for but actually replace pieces from the literary canon. I feel this part scares many teachers because there are so many lessons from teaching the classics and so few resources from contemporary pieces. It is a lot of work to create something brand new, but it is also very rewarding.

I would also like to interview teachers that have made the change to use multicultural literature and find what their results have been. I would like to promote professional development opportunities for all teachers to learn about what students can be learning and the opportunities and choices that are out there. Teachers need to make drastic changes to their approach to getting youths of color motivated to read because all students deserve to read literature that they can connect with. Educators need to push forward to change the way the traditional ELA classroom looks. Let's make it great, fun, motivating, and engaging for all.

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